



CORRECT DISPOSAL OF WASTE

In Italy we produce on average more than 1 kg of waste a day per person (according to some estimates up to 1,5 kg/day), that means a yearly production of tens of millions of tons of waste:

**AROUND 30.000.000.000 KG
EQUIVALENT TO 2.000.000 OF MID-SIZED CARS**

If all these wastes are not properly disposed, they cause an unsustainable pollution to our planet and seriously impact land and marine ecosystems, endangering many animal and plant species.

The following table shows by way of example how long it takes before wastes naturally decompose:

| TYPE OF WASTE | LAND (years) | SEA (years) |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Bottle or plastic bag | 100-1000 years | 1000 years |
| Glass bottle | Around 400 years | 1000 years |
| Phone cards, prepaid phone cards and the like | Around 100 years | 1000 years |
| Plastic dishes and cutlery | 100-1000 years | 100-1000 years |
| Polystyrene bowl | Over 1000 years | 100-1000 years |
| Aluminium drink can | 10-100 years | 500 years |
| Disposable nappies | Around 400 years | Around 200 years |
| Chewing gum | 5 years | 5 years |
| Cigarette bud | 1-2 years | 2-5 years |
| Wool or cotton garment | 1 year | 8-10 months |

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------|------------|
| Apple core | 3 months | 3-6 months |
| Matches | 6 months | 6 months |
| Paper napkins and towels | 3 months | 3 months |
| Newspapers | 6 months | 2 months |

As can be seen it takes hundreds if not thousands of years to make a waste “disappear” by itself and, especially for plastic wastes, we cannot wait that a bottle or a bag decompose naturally.

HOW CAN WE PROTECT OUR PLANET?

It is necessary not to discharge wastes into the environment and dispose of them properly, trying to recycle the materials as much as possible. Separate collection is the best way to preserve and maintain natural resources, both to our benefit and to that of the environment where we live, but especially to the benefit of future generations: the re-use and recovery of wastes, from paper to plastic, glass, wood, medicines and spent batteries contribute to return and keep a “naturally” richer environment.

Waste recycling allows important savings of energy and raw materials:

- In addition to combating climate change, recycled paper allows to reduce deforestation, to prevent soil erosion, to preserve water basins and to protect biodiversity. In humanitarian terms, recycled paper allows to preserve forests that host and sustain hundreds of indigenous. It is estimated that 1,6 billions of people are highly dependent on forests. To produce a ton of recycled paper, we use 2700 kWh of electrical energy and 1800 litres of water, but we save 4100 kWh of electrical energy, 26 m³ of water and the emission of 27 Kg. of CO₂ and no trees are cut down.
- Traditional landfilling of organic material is a waste, because it can be used to produce compost.
- To produce 1 kg of aluminium, we need 15 kWh of electrical energy; to produce 1 Kg. of recycled aluminium we need instead 0,8 kWh: in Italy, every year, we consume more than 1.5 billion of cans.
- If not separated, medicines in landfills can cause toxic fumes and pollute the leachate; moreover, the presence of antibiotics in wastes can facilitate the selection of resistant bacterial strains.
- Separate waste of glass allows in Italy a yearly saving equivalent to 400.000 tons of petroleum. In Italy, during year 2012, 76% of glass packings has been recycled.
- From 100 kg of used oil we can obtain 68 Kg of new oil: a single Kg. of used oil released into the environment pollutes 1.000 m³ of water.

(sources: wikipedia, educambiente.tv, legambiente, WWF)

For a good waste collection, it is necessary that wastes are properly separated, collecting them in separate containers (one for each type of waste) suitable for their containment.